

Tale Feathers

MAY
2008

Volume 75
Number 4

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Conservation
Updates

....and MORE!!

Be sure to visit our
website to
get any new info
after publication.

Talefeathers Newsletter going Electronic **FINAL NOTICE**

The St. Louis Audubon Society has decided to join many other organizations and move to electronic newsletters. This move will take place in mid-2008 at which time we will discontinue the full distribution of the printed *Talefeathers* as you have known it. We are doing this to save cost, the volunteer time involved in putting out the paper version and the uncertainty of the scheduling of the printing company and postal services. This should avoid the problem that we have had of newsletters arriving at your homes after an announced event has already been held. In addition, the electronic form will give us the flexibility to send out occasional short newsletters when items of special interest come up. From an environmental standpoint this switch will also save the paper on which 2500+ newsletters are printed.

In order for you to receive your electronic newsletter we will need your e-mail address. As soon as possible send your e-mail address to Sue Gustafson at smgustafson@juno.com. **Please include your regular mailing address and zip code for cross checking purposes.** Sue will compile the addresses into an updateable data base.

We will mail a limited number of paper newsletters to any of our members who do not have e-mail access. This may be a much simplified version of our current *Talefeathers*. If you do not have an e-mail address and still wish to receive the newsletter you must mail a note to our post office box P.O. Box 220227, St. Louis, MO 63122.

Failure to send either your e-mail address or a specific request for continuation of a paper newsletter will result in your not receiving any newsletter. However, we will mail out the annual calendar to all of our members in August of each year. Included will be instructions for putting your e-mail address into the data base and/or requesting the paper version of *Talefeathers*.

St. Louis Audubon Society

Opportunities

and

Announcements

Mission Statement
of
The St. Louis
Audubon Society

Create a
community
connection to nature
through
Education &
Conservation

Goals
To foster an
awareness and
understanding
of birds and other
wildlife and their
habitats

To educate our
community so people
can make
informed decisions
about the natural
world.

Forest Park Forever Bird Walk News!

St. Louis Audubon Society Board Members, Lynne Breakstone and Jim Wilson, will continue to lead beginning bird walks on the first Saturday of every month. Walks will be outdoors; we will meet in front of the Education and Visitor Center

(5595 Grand Dr.) at 8:30 a.m., and we will bird for approximately 2 hours.

Kindly RSVP to Anne Grossman at (314) 367-7275, ext. 14 or email to agrossmann@forestparkforever.org.

The First Saturday of the Month

All ages and birding levels welcome.

Spring Plantings and Conservation Go Hand in Hand

The weather breaks, everything's green, and spring brings energetic ideas about gardening and birding. Conservation stewardship can start in our own yards, so get set to plant some regional natives, if you haven't done so already. If you make the correct selections for a given area, perennial natives require less care and water, and will come back year after year. They can provide habitat and food for birds and other wildlife. This in turn will help check damage from insects by encouraging the wildlife that feeds upon them. You should even have a bit less grass to cut, which can help reduce mower emissions.

So let's see. You'll conserve your time and water usage, improve water quality by avoiding pesticide use, improve air quality by reducing mower emissions, and enjoy an increase in the wildlife that visits your yard. And clearing invasive non-native plants will add to the stewardship and enjoyment of your yard also. Start now by taking the Healthy Yard Pledge on the National Audubon's website www.audubonathome.org. You will also find additional colorful and inspiring information about how to encourage more birds and make a difference in your own backyard, deck, or subdivision.

Find a super guide to plant choices for all situations, as well as where to purchase these natives, at www.grownative.org or www.missouriconservation.org. If you don't have access to a computer, you can request information by writing to:

Grow Native

PO Box 104671

Jefferson City, MO 65110

Karen B. Meyer, SLAS VP of Conservation

John James Audubon His Life and Art

Tuesday, May 20, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.
Powder Valley Nature Center

Vicki Flier, Vice President of Education for St. Louis Audubon Society, will discuss John James Audubon with a particular focus on understanding his life and development as a naturalist through an appreciation of his bird art. Join us at 7 p.m. on Tuesday May 20th at the Powder Valley Nature Center to see Vicki's presentation.

Have you ever wondered how the Audubon Society really got its start? Did you know you can tell the progression of John James Audubon's work by just looking at his art? How about the stories he told about the birds he painted, want to hear some? Did he get the respect of his peers? Who were his peers? Was he a naturalist or artist or a frontiersman? Is George Bird Grinnell one of your heroes? If not he should be. Vicki will answer these questions and others during her presentation of twenty of Audubon's works. Also on display will be other collectables of Audubon's work.

Vicki Flier has been a St. Louis Audubon Society board member for more than 10 years and currently in the middle of her second commitment as Vice President of Education. She was an integral member of the core group that initiated grade school presentations on birds and other natural history topics that now serves over 2,000 students annually. She was also the driving force behind the creation of the Master Naturalist Certificate partnership with St. Louis Community College that provides a formalized education, training and recognition program for conservation-minded volunteers in the St. Louis area.

From the intersection of Interstates 44 & 270, take Watson Rd. to Geyer Rd. Turn north on Geyer and cross the bridge to Cragwold Road on your left. Go west on Cragwold for 1 mi. to nature center entrance on right. Follow drive to parking lot. Enter building through left entrance.

Questions, call Mitch Leachman at 314-739-5112.

May Birding Trips-The best month to bird in St. Louis! Pat Lueders

May 10, Saturday, 7:30 am—Tower Grove Park

Still learning the warbler songs? Bob Bailey, our expert on bird vocalizations, will help us identify the singing warblers, vireos, and other migrants by their songs and chip notes, a real challenge! Join us at the entrance to the Gaddy Bird Garden, and we will spend the morning birding the park. A special leader for beginners will be available to give special attention to our new birders.

May 17, Saturday, 7:30am—Columbia Bottom

Mike Arduser with the Missouri Department of Conservation will share his expertise of the Columbia Bottom area with us on this popular annual trip. There will be some walking involved so wear comfortable shoes and clothing. Please meet at the visitor center parking lot (see directions under the May 3 trip posting).

May 21, Wednesday, 7:00 am—Shaw Nature Reserve

John Solodar will lead this trip to one of our most popular spring birding sites because of the great diversity of habitat. Warblers will still be migrating and some of the later spring migrants should be arriving. This is a great place to see tanagers and orioles. Bring your lunch; and, weather permitting, we will picnic on the grounds. We will meet at the entrance to the reserve where there will be a \$3 entrance fee if you aren't a member of the garden. Directions: Take I-44 west to the Gray Summit exit (Hwy 100). Cross over I-44 on 100 and turn right. The reserve entrance is the first left.

May 24, RMBS (Riverlands)

Josh Uffman, one of the best young birders in our area, will lead this spring trip to Riverlands. Marsh birds, sparrows, and other spring migrants can often be found here. Bring your scopes if you have one or share with others. We will meet at the Teal Pond parking lot. Directions: Take I-270 to Hwy 367. Go north towards Alton and turn right at the last exit before the bridge. Turn right at the first road after the gas station. Don't miss this late spring trip to one of our best birding areas.

May 31, Saturday, Lost Valley & Katy Trail (Weldon Springs)

Another one of our great birders and photographers, Mike Grant, has been leading trips in this area for years. There is some light hiking involved and bring your bug repellent. This is a popular area to see nesting warblers, vireos, and especially flycatchers. We will meet at the Lost Valley parking lot. Directions: From Hwy 40, take the Hwy 94 exit south 5.7 miles to the Lost Valley Trailhead on your right.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Torrey Berger

As I come to the end of my tenure as President of SLAS, let me say that it has been an honor and privilege to have worked with a most dedicated and effective leadership team, one which has made the job of President a simple and enjoyable one indeed.

It is that team which has given me the ability to brag about a number of accomplishments over the last three years:

1. The expansion of our local territory to include St. Charles County, Missouri and Madison and St. Clair in Illinois. This expansion, due primarily to the efforts of the late Jim Holsen, has swelled our membership to over 3000.
2. The increased attendance at our field trips due in large part to innovative approaches by our trip coordinators, John Solodar and Pat Lueders.
3. Our partnership with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers for the provision of expanded wetlands at Riverlands which will be managed primarily for shorebirds. This effort was greatly enhanced by the hard work and generous contribution of Paul Bauer and the cooperation of Pat McGinnes and Charles Deutsch of the Riverlands staff.
4. Our commitment to seek opportunities to do "on the ground" conservation work both locally and in those far distant areas where the birds we think of as "ours" spend a good part of their lives. These efforts received a tremendous boost from Tom Creley, who established the Cathleen Creley Memorial Fund, which is an endowment fund for conservation and education projects. Again, John Solodar stepped up as chairman of our Latin American Opportunities Committee, which raised over \$5000.00 for work at Pico Bonito, a preserve in Honduras.

Things are well set for next year with an outstanding leadership team in place. Dave Rogles will be at the helm, with Karen Meyer and Vicki Flier continuing their great work as V.P. Conservation and Education, respectively. Sue Gustafson will replace John Solodar as V.P. of Finance, while John will move to Treasurer. After a fantastic tenure as Secretary, Linda Zurfluh is retiring and will be replaced by Susan Krupa. New faces on the Board of Directors include Shawn Clubb, Tom Borman, two hard core birders and Charlie Deutsch, the biologist from Riverlands office.

Although I'm out, I'll still be around, ex-officio, as past President. I look forward to seeing SLAS go and grow over the next few years.

Torrey Berger.

Birding, Education, Conservation and the Boreal

Annual Dinner a Great Success!

With nearly 100 in attendance, the Society celebrated the year's accomplishments and honored a select few at Orlando Gardens on Friday, April 11th. Awards were given for Outstanding Educator, Outstanding Conservationist, Outstanding Volunteer and Lifetime Achievement. Capping the evening was a discussion by Dr. Jeff Wells, Senior Scientist for the Boreal Songbird Initiative, on the conservation status and needs of many of the spring songbirds we see in the St. Louis area that actually breed in the boreal forest of North America.

Bruce Schuette, Naturalist at Cuivre River State Park, received the Conservationist award in part for his decades-long efforts at habitat restoration in the Park and partnerships with other groups, including St. Louis Audubon, on many regional conservation issues. Nancy Schnell, science teacher at Ferguson Middle School, received the Educator award for her creative approaches to natural history education with her students, including many hands-on field experiences including annual cleanups of a park near the school. Sue Gustafson was honored as Outstanding Volunteer for the many committees and projects she has been a part of for nearly eight years including the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative, Important Bird Area designations for several St. Louis-area locations, wetland conservation including the marsh at Little Creve Coeur and many others. Bill Rowe, of the Thomas Jefferson School and the Missouri Botanical Garden, received the Robert J. Terry Lifetime Achievement Award. Bill has been leading field trips around the St. Louis and abroad for many years and is well known for his Basics of Birding courses at the Garden which he has taught for some 20 years. Thru his personal style and passion for birds, Bill has introduced countless individuals to the joy of bird watching and has created many conservationists and environmental leaders in the process. Finally, the Society presented scholarships to two graduate students from the World Ecology Center at the University of Missouri, St. Louis—Jenni Higashiguchi and Matthew Medeiros. Both will use the funds to further their research in avian diseases.

The evening included a "paper adoption" of sixteen select Boreal bird species as a fundraiser for the Society's general fund and Dr. Well's Boreal Songbird Initiative organization. Many thanks to all of those who participated! The final tally is not yet in as we continue to receive adoption requests and donations, yet it will be well in excess of \$1,000. In addition, the Society received two very generous donations of \$500 each, from Lewis, Rice and Fingersh, L.C and an anonymous donor.

In addition, many thanks to all those that assisted in making the evening a wonderful success, not the least of which included: Lynn Breakstone, Julie Leeman and the awards committee; Mike Grant for his photography skills; Karen Meyer, Susan & Daniel Krupa and Dave Rogles for manning the registration table; Vicki Flier, Dorrie Dee, Sharon Nickl and John & Nancy Solodar for making a presentation of the Boreal bird adoption fundraiser, and Torrey Berger for coordinating the entire evening.

**The St. Louis Audubon
Society**

Sends Out a BIG

Thank-You!

With the final paper edition of Tale Feathers,
the board of Directors wanted to recognize the
members, groups and businesses that honored
us by contributing to our Annual Appeal.

Thank-you for your generous gift and supporting our chapter and its various
activities!

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Alt Arthur Randall (Nancy)

Baglan Robert J. (Nancy)
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Rast Mary C.
Reed Martha A.
Renshaw Wanda G. (James T.)
Rezny Joseph A. (Barbara M.)
Rhiney Paul F. (Mrs. Vera W)
Salsgiver Dayna
Schaefer Lynn
Schmitt Donald E. (Joyce M.)
Schoening William (Sue)
Schweitzer Barbara A (Henry)
Sept David S. (Melodie L.)
Silverman June K. (Robert A.)
Singer Daniel E.
Sivcovich Oliver J.
Smith Carl David (Jane H.)
Stupp Robert P., JR.
Souder Donald L. (Sally)
Symington Janey
Thelen Michael S. (Jo Ellen)
Vastola Edward F. (Eileen M.)
Vitt Lorrie
Widmer Rad
Wilson James H. (Evelyn L.)
Weber Frederick D. (Margaret V.)
Weber Pamela L.
Wills Nancy
Flaherty Nancy L
Reiss Mary C.
Gustafson Susan M.

Education Team Report

Spring time in St. Louis is an exciting time. Everybody is planning outdoor trips and schools want to know about the birds, butterflies and pond critters. We are busy! To date for April and May we have 18 programs planned and we are getting calls every day for new reservations. It is truly an exciting time of year for the Education Team.

Wetland for Kids, held at Busch Conservation Area, was heavily attended this year. The weather was great after days of rain and gray skies the parents were looking for things to do with their kids, and we had over 500 kids and 250 adults.

Earth Day we were at Missouri Botanical Garden with other EarthShare groups promoting SLAS and teaching bird classes at the Science Center.

International Migratory Bird Day/Week we will be with the Lindbergh School District's fifth graders celebrating birds and bird-songs. This is the first time SLAS has partnered with a district to educate and inform about our neo-tropicals visitors with a birding festival. It will be an exciting time.

Over the summer we will be looking to change, adapt and write new school programs. If this is of interest to you join us for a planning meeting during July.

The Education Team wants to thank Conservation Director, Karen Meyer, for signing SLAS as a partner in "Think Outside the Bottle" campaign in St. Louis. After being voted as "The City with the Best Tasting Water" there is no reason we should be buying and using bottled water. Help save our aquifers and use the tap!

For more information or to volunteer call Vicki Flier
at 314-968-9166.

Thanks to the Donors to our Latin America Conservation effort In Pico Bonito National Park in Honduras.

Anonymous (1)
Nancy and Robert Baglan
Joe Bassler
Paul Bauer
Dianne Benjamin
Torrey Berger
Tom Bormann
Lynne Breakstone
David Dean
Barbara Dietrich
Maggie Eisenberger
Jane Fitzgerald
Vicki Flier
Mike Grant

What's a Conservation Advocate to Do?

Let me share a local example with you.

Recently I've had the pleasure to meet several St. Peters residents who have a strong love of nature. It's a love strong enough to push them beyond their comfort zones, ask the questions, and take the time to get involved with plans regarding a park near their subdivision. The St. Peter's Parks Department is acquiring an additional 88+ acres adjacent to Rabbit Run and Glen Travis Parks that has been a haven for plants, birds, and other creatures. It seemed it might be destined to become an over-developed park.

These concerned residents, Joan Carpenter and Theresa Davidson, attended the St. Peters Parks' board meetings, gathered information, produced a powerpoint presentation highlighting the wildlife in area, and contacted organizations they felt could help shed light on what could be done. St. Louis Audubon representatives Karen Meyer and David Rogles reviewed the area and felt it definitely warranted a letter to Mayor Len Pagano and Parks Manager Jeff Hutsler. We wrote asking them to consider the benefits of allowing the 88+ acres to attain its full potential as a natural wildlife environment. We presented opportunities for the Parks Department to acquire help with plans that would encourage more native plants, birds, and animals for residents to enjoy. The mayor quickly and graciously responded with a desire to meet with all interested residents and The St. Louis Audubon Society.

The meeting provided an opportunity for Jeff Hutsler and Mayor Pagano to present pending plans, and allowed the residents to voice their concerns and hopes for the area. These community leaders appear to be sympathetic to the wishes of the residents. We are optimistic, but it remains to be seen what will unfold. With continued dialog among city management, Joan, Theresa, and other residents, we hope that the conservation vision for the area will be recognized. Many of us understand the importance of these pockets of green space to wildlife survival. Those who appreciate, respect, and value these resources know that it is in our best interest to protect them. If you are interested in seeing this area preserved as a natural wildlife habitat, please contact Jeff Hutsler and Mayor Len Pagano to let them know.

Karen B. Meyer
St. Louis Audubon Society
Vice President of Conservation



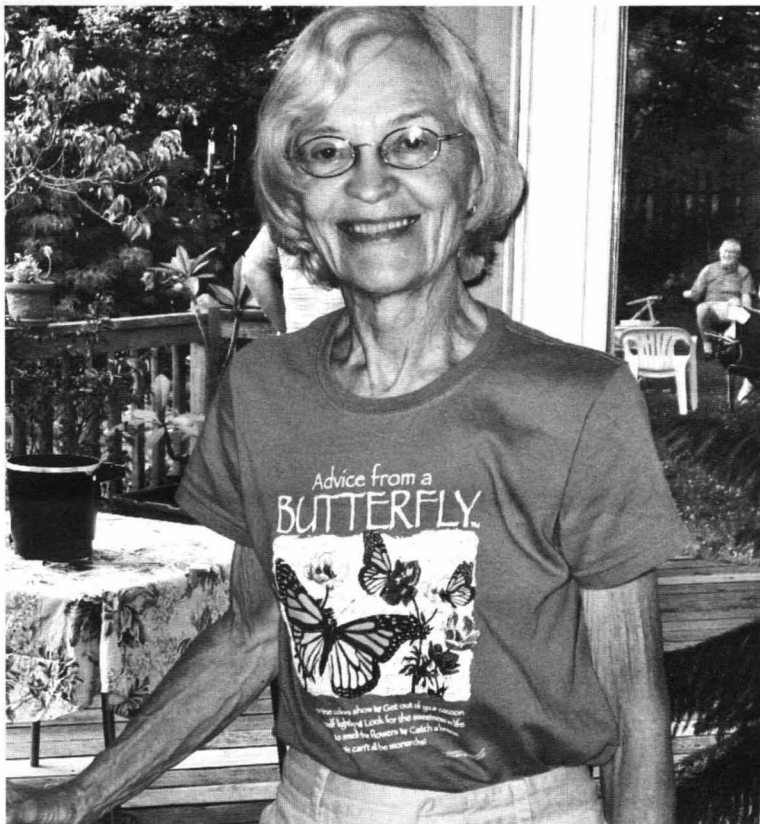
Pat McCormick Remembered

by Vicki Flier

The St. Louis Audubon Society and the environmental community as a whole lost a terrific member and advocate on Friday, April 4, 2008 when Patricia Ann McCormick passed away. Pat was a long time member of St. Louis Audubon Society, a very valuable member of the Education Team, and a big proponent of native forbs and grasses. Pat taught elementary school in the Webster Groves School District for over 30 years, instilling a love of nature in her classroom. (Her classes had a feeder watch before there was an official program.) She was a member of nature related groups too numerous to list.

While those qualities are good and admirable the thing I loved most about Pat was her positive outlook on living. I never heard her peep a bad word about anyone or anything. When I called her to complain about someone, by the end of the conversation she had me turned around finding the positive about that person. She even defended cowbirds by reminding us that it wasn't their fault they had bad behavior but our own for killing the buffalo herds. (That, of course, is not to say given a chance she wouldn't snatch an egg out of a nest.)

At her service on Wednesday, Sister Joan reminded us that the best way to honor someone is to try to live your life as you admired theirs. May we all find nature a daily surprise and then pass that surprise on in memory of Pat.



Tale Feathers

Tale Feathers is published monthly by the St. Louis Audubon Society. Messenger Printing prints 2,600 copies of each newsletter on recycled paper using soy ink. Mary Dueren edits the newsletter.

To contact the editor, call evenings to 314-576-1473 or email: mdueren@charter.net.

St. Louis Audubon Society 2007 - 2008

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*Time is running out.....***